



Three recent deaths, all apparently due to suicide, point to the traumatic impact of violence and the need for intense community awareness and ongoing mental health support for those who survive violent events.

Our hearts go out to the families of Jeremy Richman, a father whose child was killed in the Newtown, Connecticut Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012, Sydney Aiello, and another teen whose identity has not been released, who attended and were at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, when 17 students and staff members were shot and killed there last February.

The heroic role played by Parkland survivors, and their leadership of a national youth movement for gun control, must not be interpreted as evidence that their pain is behind them. The three tragic deaths reveal the depth and persistence of trauma among survivors of violence; particularly among youth. In fact, in the United States, suicide is the second leading cause of death for young people aged 10 to 24. In Los Angeles County, suicide ranks as the third leading cause of death. And in the County and the nation, it is clear that violence and trauma play a role in these painful statistics.

It is also clear that suicide is preventable.

- As parents, friends, colleagues we can contribute to prevention by knowing the warning signs of suicidality, taking comments about suicidal thoughts seriously, and assessing and preventing access to means of suicide (guns, medications, etc). Resources listed below can help adults (parents, clinicians, clergy, and caregivers) learn how to ask youth about suicidal thoughts after a traumatic experience.
- As community members, we can all support policies that expand access to mental health and other youth resources that help prevent violence and address the underlying causes of mass shootings and other traumatic events that pose such profound risk to our children and neighbors.

If you know someone you feel may be at risk or if you just want to learn more these resources for youth can help:

- LA County 211 www.211la.org
- LA County Department of Mental Health Access Center, open 24/7, 1-800-854-7771
- Teen Line – 310-855-4673 www.teenlineonline.org, Text TEEN to 839863
- Trevor Project - Lifeline 1-866-488-7386 www.thetrevorproject.org, Text (TREVOR to 1-202-304-1200)
- Los Angeles LGBT Center www.lalgbtcenter.org
- Active Minds www.activeminds.org
- Know the Signs www.suicideispreventable.org
- Love Is Respect 1-866-331-9474 www.loveisrespect.org, Text LOVEIS to 22522
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

When we reach out to the people in our lives, and talk with those who have experienced traumatic events, we can help reduce the stigma of seeking mental health treatment. Together, we can take action to support each other and work to prevent suicide in our communities.